

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring 2002

**February 27, March 27, 4-6 p.m. Monthly Commissioner Meeting.** The Hurley Building, 19 Staniford St., Rm. 307c, Boston, MA. For more information visit <http://www.mass.gov/women>

**March 2 through 31 International Women's Month Art Exhibition, and March 14 Reception for the International Women's Month Art Exhibition 2002**, both events to be held at the Fuller Museum of Art, 455 Oak Street, Brockton, MA, 508-588-6000, For more information, contact: Barbara Barry, 508-588-9100 Ext. 1484, or e-mail [bbarry@massasoit.mass.edu](mailto:bbarry@massasoit.mass.edu)

**March 6 International Women's Month Kick-off Breakfast** to be held at Massasoit Community College, Brockton MA. For more information, please call Barbara Barry at 508-588-9100 Ext. 1484, or e-mail her at [bbarry@massasoit.mass.edu](mailto:bbarry@massasoit.mass.edu)

**March 6, 5:15 p.m.** Worcester City Manager's Committee on the Status of Women **Award Ceremony – Woman of Consequence and Young Woman of Consequence** at Worcester City Hall, 3rd Floor. Contact: Larry Raymond 508-799-1071

**March 8, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. International Women's Day Breakfast Celebration** at Simmons College, entitled **Raising Awareness and Empowering Women through the Visual Arts**. Call 617-626-6520 to RSVP by March 1.

**March 8, 12 Noon** Springfield Commission for Women – **Flag Raising and Honoring 4 Women at City Hall**. Contact 413-787-6100.

**March 9, 5 – 10 p.m.** Association of Haitian Women is hosting a **Commemoration of International Women's Day** at the Roxbury Community College Student Center, Contact: 617-287-0096

**March 9, 7:00 p.m.** Cambridge Women's Commission, Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St, Central Square. **30th Anniversary of the Takeover that Created the Women's Center – Video and Speakers**. Contact: 617-349-4697

**March 14, 12 noon – 2 p.m. Sharing the Power: Lunchtime with Women Legislators**, the State House Great Hall. Sponsored by the American Association of University Women-Massachusetts.

**March 19** Brookline Commission on the Status of Women **Essay and Art Contest: "The Woman who Most Inspired Me,"** Contact: Jan Cannavan at 617-731-8686, E-mail: [brooklinewomen@hotmail.com](mailto:brooklinewomen@hotmail.com)

**March 23, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Money Conference for Women**, Sheraton Boston Hotel. Register at <http://www.moneyconferenceforwomen.com>

**April 16, 12 noon – 2 p.m. Pay Equity Day** at Tatnuck Booksellers, 335 Chandler St., Worcester. *Table with information about Pay Equity and books and menu items at a discount to women including books on women's issues.*

**April 17 Public Hearing in Fitchburg** at Fitchburg State College.

**May 8 Public Hearing in Lynn** at Girls Inc.

*For more information on the events listed above, please call the Commission office at 617-626-6520 or visit our Web site at <http://www.mass.gov/women>*



## Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

The Charles F. Hurley Building  
19 Staniford Street, 6th Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114



# The Update

SPRING 2002

A NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



*Letter from  
the Chair,*  
**MARIANNE  
FLECKNER**

I am delighted to announce that 2001 was a very productive year for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. Our support for the proposed legislation that allows domestic violence victims to collect unemployment insurance was successful and the legislation was passed into law.

The Commission's public hearings continued; the most recent hearings were held in Worcester and Brockton. Many women and girls testified regarding issues that consume their daily lives. These issues include, but are not limited to, domestic violence, affordable high quality childcare, affordable housing, access to health care and economic stability or equal pay for equal work.

On behalf of the full Commission, I would like to thank our former Chair, Susana Segat, for all her hard work and dedication over the past two years. I would also like to extend our wholehearted thanks and best wishes to former Commissioners Mary Ann Glendon, Gwendolyn Tyre and Sandra Jesse who recently stepped down.

We would like to welcome our newest Commissioners, Jennifer Bracer, a John M. Olin Fellow in Law at Harvard Law School, Dianne Luby, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and Nilka I. Alvarez-Rodriguez, Lawrence City Councilor and a Client Services Manager at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center.



*Letter from the  
Executive Director,*  
**PRISCILLA  
GOLDING**

In our third year of operation, we at the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women are pleased to have come so far in such a short time. Our priorities continue to be childcare issues and the prevention of violence against women and girls. Focusing on workforce issues in the childcare communities we plan to support the public and private endeavors to strengthen the quality and continuity of childcare staff. Continuing to explore innovative methods of violence prevention, we are working closely with the many committed individuals and agencies on issues of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In the fall of 2001 we welcomed Sonia Shah as our Administrative Assistant and Paula Daddona as Program Coordinator. Both women bring a commitment to improving the status of women and girls. Paula Daddona is currently the Chair of the Brockton Mayor's Commission on Women's Issues, where she has volunteered since 1999. While at the University of Michigan, Sonia Shah volunteered and worked at the campus Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center. This season we also have two extraordinary interns, Valerie Taing, from Simmons College and Alison Mitchell, from Northeastern University Law School, to round out a very productive Commission staff.

## **Commissioners**

Marianne Fleckner, Chair  
Elaine Guiney, Vice-Chair  
Jo Anne Thompson, Secretary  
Kathleen Casavant, Treasurer  
Minosca Alcantara  
Jennifer Bracer  
Donna Finneran  
Barbara Gomes-Beach  
Mary Clare Higgins  
Frances X. Hogan  
Susan K. Howards  
Helen Jackson  
Mary Reardon Johnson  
Dianne Luby  
Roseanna Means  
Angela Menino  
Nilka I. Alvarez-Rodriguez  
Susana Segat  
Kateri Walsh

## **Staff**

Priscilla Golding, Executive Director  
Paula Daddona, Program Coordinator  
Sonia Shah, Administrative Assistant

## **2001-2002 Fall/Winter Interns**

Alison Mitchell, Northeastern  
University Law School  
Valerie Taing, Simmons College

## **Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women**

The Charles F. Hurley Building  
19 Staniford St., 6th Floor  
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TTY: 711-617-626-6520  
E-mail: mcsww@state.ma.us  
Web: www.mass.gov/women

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### ***Legislation Endorsed by the Commission Succeeds in Becoming Law***

One piece of legislation endorsed by the Commission has become law! An Act to Ensure Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance for Victims of Domestic Violence was signed into law by Acting Governor Swift on August 11, 2001. This law will help ease the devastating financial impact of domestic violence and assist those affected by domestic violence on the road to economic security.

The Commission is currently supporting two other pieces of legislation: An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies, which provides for gender-neutral insurance policies, and An Act to Establish a Self-Sufficiency Standard in Massachusetts, which creates a standard that calculates the realistic costs of housing, food, childcare, transportation, medical care and taxes by region within Massachusetts. At press time, both bills were in House committees. The Commission is also working to create legislation that establishes a Berkshire Women's Commission. Currently, the Legislative Subcommittee is tracking more than thirty bills before the legislature that concern the Commission's priorities of Childcare and Violence Against Women.

### ***Violence Against Women and Childcare Task Forces***

The Commission has two task forces: Violence Against Women and Childcare. These task forces are working with public and private organizations throughout the state, focusing on issues such as workforce training and violence prevention.

The Commission is pleased to support the Early Education for All (EEA) campaign. EEA is a project of Strategies for Children, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing universal, quality early childhood education to 3, 4 and 5-year old children in Massachusetts. At the November Commission meeting, Margaret Blood, President of EEA, made a presentation that focused on the connection between early childhood education and success later in life. EEA plans to file legislation this year that would create a uniform standard for early childhood education throughout the state.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women extends its congratulations to Commissioner Mary Clare Higgins who was recently re-elected Mayor of Northampton, MA for a second term. Commissioner Higgins won 87% of the votes and she is the city's 43rd mayor.

The Commission would also like to extend its congratulations to Commissioner Roseanna Means, for a featured article in the Jan. 15, 2002 issue of Family Circle magazine. Dr. Means received the Family Circle Halo Award for her medical service to homeless women. Dr. Means offers a safe, welcoming place for low-income or homeless women to receive free medical treatment through Women of Means, a volunteer organization she founded in 1998.

### **Taunton Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women**

Taunton Mayor Ted Strojny will be filing an ordinance to establish the Taunton Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women. A planning committee representing the mayor's office and community activists has been working with Executive Director Priscilla Golding to prepare the ordinance, outreach materials and application forms. This spring, candidates will be sought from Taunton residents to fill the nine-person commission.

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT

### **Our Web site URL Has Changed**

*MCSW's Web site URL has changed to **www.mass.gov/women**. Please visit our Web site often as it is updated on a regular basis.*

## Public Hearings

The most recent public hearings were held in Worcester and Brockton, MA. Many women, girls, and some men testified regarding issues that affect women's and girls' daily lives. Top issues included domestic violence, affordable housing, affordable high quality childcare and access to health care. A summary report of the Worcester public hearing testimony is posted on the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women's Web site at <http://www.mass.gov/women>.



**Executive Director Priscilla Golding and the Mayor of Brockton, John T. Yunits, Jr. at the Brockton Public Hearing on November 14, 2001.**

The Brockton summary report will soon be distributed and posted as well.

The next public hearings are scheduled to be held April 17 in Fitchburg, MA and May 8 in Lynn. Details will be posted on our Web site as they become available (<http://www.mass.gov/women>).

## March is National Women's History Month

National Women's History Month began in 1978 as effort to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of women in American history. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week." Then in 1987, at the request of educators, museums, and libraries across the country, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the celebration to the entire month of March. A National Women's History Month Congressional Resolution was quickly passed with strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

The theme for National Women's History Month 2002 is *Women Sustaining the American Spirit*. The goal is to showcase the diverse and interlocking stories of women who have created and affirmed the American spirit. The 2002 theme will help deliver the message of who American women are and what they have accomplished.

To celebrate Women's History Month, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is co-sponsoring several events in March. For more information check the Calendar of Events on page 4.

### *Did you know...*

**International Women's Day is March 8th.** The first annual International Women's Day was held on March 8, 1911. Today, celebrations are held worldwide to recognize women's achievements. On March 8, from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Simmons College are co-sponsoring an International Women's Day Breakfast Celebration entitled *Raising Awareness and Empowering Women through the Visual Arts*. For more information check the Calendar of Events on page 4.

## Commonwealth Announces Support of New YWCA Battered Women's Shelter

State Senate Majority Leader Linda J. Melconian recently announced, on behalf of Governor Jane Swift and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that \$2.5 million has been committed from the Housing Innovations Fund of the Department of Housing and Community Development to support the YWCA of Western Massachusetts' capital project to build a brand new 48-bed, state-of-the-art battered women's shelter.

The new shelter will triple the YWCA's current shelter capacity, allowing a substantial increase in the number of women and children served in the shelter, as well as allow for innovative enhancements to the scope of services provided to both women and children. The new shelter will include childcare and classroom space specifically for the children in the shelter.

The total cost of the new shelter and program services center is estimated to be \$7.7 million. The YWCA has already raised more than \$4.5 million in public and private funds in support of the projects. For additional information, please contact the YWCA's Executive Director, Mary Reardon Johnson at 413-732-3121.



**YWCA Executive Director Mary Reardon Johnson accepts a check from the Commonwealth of MA. Pictured L to R: Mayor Michael Albano, Senator Linda J. Melconian, YWCA, Executive Director Mary Reardon Johnson, Mary Jenewin-Caplin from Governor Swift's office, and Representative Stephen Buoniconti.**

## "Connecting for Change" Public Release

On November 2, 2001 the release of "Connecting for Change: Results of the Mass Action for Women Audit" was held at the State House. Over a hundred people gathered to view the multimedia presentation on the three-year project. The Audit was a collaboration of Mass Action for Women and the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Funded with grants from the Mott Foundation, the Boston Foundation and the Cisco Foundation, the project was a grassroots participatory research project inspired by the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing.

Common gaps and concerns cited by women from across the state included:

- Inadequate transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited access to health care
- Language and geographical barriers between women
- The need for networks of support for women and girls
- Effects of racism and lack of cultural awareness.

The full report on this exciting project can be accessed through the Web site at [www.maw.umb.edu](http://www.maw.umb.edu). A CD is also available by calling the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at 617-287-5541.